

NEW HAVEN RAIL YARD, LOCKER BUILDING
(Amtrak Crew Building)
Vicinity of Cedar Street
New Haven
New Haven County
Connecticut

HAER CT-160-H
CT-160-H

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
PHILADELPHIA SUPPORT OFFICE
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Custom House, 3rd Floor
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

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Location: Vicinity of Cedar Street
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New Haven County, Connecticut

USGS New Haven Quadrangle, UTM Coordinates:
18.673360.4573110

Date of Construction: ca. 1930

Present Owner: Connecticut Department of Transportation
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, Connecticut 06131

Present Owner: National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak)

Present Use: Offices; lockers and wash rooms for railroad personnel

Significance: The Locker Building is significant as part of the early twentieth-century improvements to the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad's New Haven facilities. The railroad was one of the busiest in the country. In addition to carrying freight, it operated both Boston to New York passenger service and commuter traffic between southern Connecticut and New York City. This building provided train personnel with toilets, wash rooms, and lockers.

Project Information: The rail yard is being reconfigured to provide for improved operation of commuter and Amtrak Northeast Corridor trains and to provide a storage yard for commuter equipment. The building will be demolished to make room for storage tracks. This documentation was undertaken pursuant to a Memorandum of Agreement among the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Railroad Administration, the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

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Description

The Locker Building, now known as the Amtrak Crew Building, is a long, narrow brick building that measures 34-1/2' x 111' in plan. Most of the building is a single story high, with the northernmost portion (29-1/2') two stories high. It is oriented with its long axis in an approximately north-south direction. The pattern of the brickwork is common bond with Flemish variation. A low parapet with concrete coping conceals the building's flat roof; the parapet is stepped on the north and south elevations. A concrete-block exterior chimney is located near the southeast rear corner of the two-story portion. The building rests on a poured-concrete foundation.

Windows and doors are set within segmental-arched openings with concrete sills and brick heads. On the one-story part, the side elevations are divided into ten bays separated by simple brick buttresses with concrete coping. The east elevation of the two-story part has a doorway flanked by windows, with four bays of windows on the west elevation. The four-bay north elevation contains separate transomed entries for the stairway (on the left) and a first-floor office (on the right). A window for the stairway is situated midway between levels in the second bay from the left. Windows are a mixture of six-over-six and modern one-over-one double-hung wood sash; many of the window openings have been boarded over with plywood.

The interior is partitioned into three main areas by brick walls. One wall marks the transition between the one-story and two-story portions and the other divides the one-story part into an 18'-long toilet and washroom area and a 62'-long locker room. An additional area for a small office is partitioned off at the extreme south end. The two-story part of the building has a furnace room on the first floor (corresponding to the location of the concrete-block chimney), its own toilet area in the southwest corner, an office at the northwest corner, a stairway at the northeast corner, and two offices on the second level. Interior wall finish mostly consists of painted brick, with a plaster interior wall in the stairway and plywood paneling in the office areas. Windows and doors have simple wood surrounds.

Historical Background

Until the Great Depression hit in full force, passenger traffic on the New Haven Railroad was a prosperous business. In addition to providing through service from Boston to New York City and points beyond, the railroad operated frequent trains in southern Connecticut and Westchester County, New York, serving commuters traveling to and from work in the metropolis. This building, constructed about 1930, provided modern sanitary and wash-up facilities for the crews working those passenger trains, along with a place to store a change of

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clothes and other personal possessions. There appears to have been no building at New Haven specifically dedicated to these purposes previously.

On the 1939 General Mechanical Superintendent map, the office area of the building is shown as "Electricians," and the locker room portion is divided into a locker room and a supply room.

Significance

The significance of the Locker Building is that it demonstrates the railroad's ongoing investment in improving passenger train operations in the early twentieth century. New Haven was the eastern terminal for its commuter operations and the overnight storage area for much of the equipment, so it made sense to locate amenities for passenger-train crews there.

Bibliography

Fairchild Aerial Survey. Aerial photographs of Connecticut, 1934. Connecticut State Library, Hartford.

New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company. Office of General Mechanical Superintendent. "Passenger Car Yard and Lamberton St. Engine Facilities, New Haven, Conn." Map No. MDF-N4, November 27, 1939. Reprinted in *New Haven Railroad - Mechanical Department Facilities Maps*. New Haven: New Haven Railroad Historical and Technical Association, 1989.

Sanborn Map and Publishing Company. Insurance maps of New Haven, 1951.